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... gods?

[John 10:16-42]

Peter Hiett @ The Sanctuary Downtown

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Sigmund Freud was a fan of Charles Darwin and his theory that all life arose from violent competition... that is, envy... the Survival of the Fittest. Freud postulated that religion was the product of the same dynamic.

Darwin had conjectured that "... men originally lived in hordes, each under the domination of a single powerful ... and jealous male."

In 1913, in his book *Totem and Taboo*, Freud explained a "vision" which he believed explained the origin of religion. Freud writes:

"The father of the primal horde, since he was an unlimited despot, had seized all the women for himself; his sons, being dangerous to him as rivals, had been killed or driven away. One day, however, the sons came together ... to kill and devour their father, who had been their enemy but also their ideal."

(from *The Question of God*, by Dr. Arnold Nicholi, pg. 19)

Freud conjectured that this primal jealous "deed" was the beginning of all religion:

"In the beginning was the deed..." wrote Freud. "The primal father, at once feared and hated, revered and envied, became the prototype of God himself."

Freud argued that each clan represented this "Father-God" with a totem... usually an animal, like a lion or a lamb. He writes, "The totem feast was the commemoration of the fearful deed." And he argued that Christian communion is the perfect example: "The totem meal still survives with but little distortion."

So, Communion is a remembrance of an act of primal jealousy, in which we murdered our common father. That is, God.

I remember learning about Freud's theory in college, and thinking, "How stupid can people get?" Now I'm almost 50, and I'm thinking maybe Sigmund Freud wasn't a complete idiot. I don't think Freud saw the heart of God, but maybe he did see his own heart – the heart of man... *Adam*.

For several weeks, we've been preaching through a scene in John 9 & 10. With a sloppy, wet kiss – with spit – Jesus heals a man born blind. And now the religious leaders don't like it. They're blind and can't see the good. They're blinded by sin, trying to make themselves good. They hate the one Who is good.

In other words, they're jealous.

In verse 16, Jesus says,

"So there will be one flock and one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."

No one takes His life from Him. So even if they take it, it's only because He already gave it. He for-gave it.

There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. Many of them said, "He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?" Others said, "These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

Jesus is either insane, evil, or God. That's a crisis... *krisis*... judgment.

At that time, the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon.

Jesus is in the temple at Hanukkah – that's the "feast of dedication." It commemorates the dedication of the temple after it was defiled by the Greeks in the 2nd century B.C. The Menorah is a remembrance of the eternal flame – the light that is to flood the temple at its consecration.

So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you are not part of my flock."

I wonder if the Father will give them to Jesus, and make them part of His flock?

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

Two persons but one thing. The word "one" is in the neuter, in the Greek. Two persons, one substance.

The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good (beautiful) works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?" The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."

"You, being a man, make yourself God." Now that is an utterly fascinating statement. For what did we learn at the start of John's Gospel? "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." Jesus is not a man making Himself God... Jesus is God making Himself man. The process will soon be complete, as He bears the sins of the world and cries from the Ancient Tree, "It is finished."

He is God making Himself man.

And who is man making himself God?

Us!

And these religious folks are accusing Jesus of their very own sin.

Remember what the serpent said in the garden?

"Take! Grasp the fruit from the tree and make yourself in the image and likeness of God."

"Grasp equality with God!"

He tempts Adam and Eve to jealousy – Jealous of God the Father.

Why would we want to make ourselves God?

Well, that's easy.

1. God owns everything, and we want to own everything.
But only One can own everything. So we're jealous of God.
To try to own everything is to try to make yourself God, and there can only be one God.

You know, whenever you're jealous, maybe you're really jealous of God...

Trying to make yourself God, because God owns everything and you want to own everything.

But you know, people who try to own everything seem to have a hard time enjoying anything.

The things I really enjoy are all gifts. They come by Grace.

2. God can do anything.
That means He's best at everything, and only One can be best.
So, trying to be the very best is trying to make yourself God, and there can only be one God.

To make yourself God is to beat every other potential god. To compete at everything is to try to beat everyone, and then you can love no one, for everyone is your enemy.

If life is survival of the fittest, you live and everyone else dies... and you're all alone.

So the first will be last... at love.

3. God is more glorious than anyone.

Only One can win the beauty pageant. Only One can be most glorious, and only One is "Worthy of all praise."

So, to be jealous of anyone's glory and praise is to be jealous of God, for all praise belongs to Him.

To make yourself most glorious, you must make everything else less glorious.

To make yourself best, you make everything else worst.

To make yourself first, you make everyone else last and least.

And Jesus said, "Whatever you do to the least of these, you do to me."

To win the beauty pageant, in your heart you must make everyone uglier than you.

To own everything, you end up killing everyone, including the Messiah.

Two Texans were trying to impress each other with the size of their ranches. One asked the other, "What's the name of your ranch?" He replied, "The Rocking R, ABC, Flying W, Circle C, Bar U, Staple Four, Box D, Rolling M, Rainbow's End, Silver Spur Ranch." The questioner was much impressed and exclaimed, "Whew! That's sure some name! How many head of cattle do you run?" The rancher answered, "Well, not many. Very few survive the branding."

Several years ago, some folks left my church and started going to Ted Haggard's church in Colorado Springs. They said it was glorious. We all idolized him... so we envied him, and wanted to be him... and in that way, hated him.

When news came out about his downfall, I said it was sad, but something in me couldn't help but be happy. And I hope to God you see how sick and twisted that is. You see, I might as well just wish him and his entire church straight to hell... and maybe I did, all in the name of Jesus.

Own everything, and everything dies.

Whenever I'm jealous of another's possessions, abilities, or glory, I'm jealous of God... trying to make myself God. And when I make myself God, I crucify the Messiah, and everyone dies, and everything turns into hell... and I actually make myself a child of the Accuser, the Devil.

Remember? That's what Jesus just told these religious Jews in chapter 8: "You are of your father the devil," and "You are seeking to kill me." Well, of course they are.

Jesus is God. God owns everything and can do anything, and is more popular than anyone. He gets all the girls... He gets the Bride.

So maybe old Sigmund Freud was onto something.

In Mark 15 and Matthew 27, "Pontius Pilate perceived that it was out of envy (jealousy) that the Chief Priests had delivered Jesus up." Pilate would have known envy.

Maybe we all betray Jesus every time we sin... for we want to be God.
It's like, in our nature.

So, God owns everything, can do anything, and is more glorious than anyone...
I mean, God gets what He wants... with just a word.
And so, of course... we want to be God!

Video Clips – *Bruce Almighty*

Scene 1

A bowl of tomato soup begins to bubble. The camera pans out and Bruce (Jim Carrey) is hovering over the soup, with his hands over it. Wind is blowing all around. The soup then parts like the Red Sea.

Scene 2

Bruce is talking to some tough looking guys in an alley. One of them says, "I tell you what: We'll apologize the day a monkey comes out my butt. Then you'll get your sorry. How 'bout that?" They all start laughing at Bruce. Bruce says, "What a coincidence! Because that's today." The guy who just addressed Bruce stops dead in his tracks and looks terribly frightened. Painfully, a large lump appears in the guy's pants. There is a ripping sound (a monkey has ripped an escape hole) and the monkey emerges from his pants.

Scene3

Bruce says, "I am Bruce Almighty. My will be done!" The camera pans out to show Bruce on top of a very high skyscraper, next to all sorts of antennas, during a severe lightning storm.

Great movie.

And I trust that you've seen that movie.

If you did, you know that Bruce gets what he wants, but it turns out that he doesn't want what he gets... because he doesn't know what's good.

4. God gets what He wants, with just a word. And Jesus is that Word.
And so, jealous of God, we take the Word, and we crucify the Word.
And yet, the Word is the Good.
God is good.

Well, God gets what He wants.

And it turns out, we want hell.

And perhaps we get what we want when we make ourselves God.

In her book, *It's All in the Playing*, Shirley McClaine describes the moment that she came to her New Age realization. She writes:

If I created my own reality, then I created everything I knew. If that was true, then I was everything, as the ancient texts taught. I was my own universe. Did that also mean I had created God, life and death? Was that why I was all there was? ... A chilling wave of loneliness rippled through me.

Well, I would think so!

I mean, that lie – that I created God – is like... the doorway to hell.

Well, Jesus is God.

And God is God.

Is God stuck in hell?

Is God alone?

No, and no.

For God doesn't try to make Himself God.

God **is** God.

And God isn't alone!

God is not one enormous, gigantic selfish person.

He is three Persons, one substance:

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit... each serving the other in Love.

God is Love, writes John.

So that last movie clip showed you what God **can** do.

This next clip reveals what God **does** do... and Who He truly is.

Video clip – *The Passion of the Christ*

“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” [Jesus exhales and gives His Spirit to the Father.]

5. God is Love.

And you know, we think we want to be God.

But on second thought, not so much. Maybe not.

Well, to try and make yourself God is the essence of sin.

Deuteronomy 4:

The Lord Your God is a consuming fire – a jealous God. Lay it to your heart that the Lord is God in heaven above, and on earth beneath. There is no other.

In Acts, chapter 12, King Herod says something, and the people of Tyre and Sidon respond that he's God. And Herod does not give God the glory, but he makes himself. It's like he sort of makes himself into a god, and immediately an angel of the Lord smites him, and he is eaten by worms.

There is one God, and He is a jealous God. Do not make yourself God.

Next verse:

The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God."

Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I said you are gods'?"

Holy moly!

Did you just hear that?

Did you hear what Jesus just said?

"Is it not written in your Law ... ?"

That's like, your Scripture. And He points out, it's yours... like it's addressed to you.

"I said you are gods."

He's quoting Psalm 82.

In the Hebrew, the word for *gods* is *Elohim*.

In the Greek, here, it's from the word *Theos*.

So, God means God... Gods means Gods.

So check this out...

Jesus, who is the Word of God, quoting Scripture that cannot be broken, within **more** Scripture that cannot be broken, says to people trying to kill him, who he previous called spawn of the devil, *"Is it not written in your Law, 'I said you are gods'?"*

"If He called them gods, to whom the Word of God came, and Scripture cannot be broken, do you say of Him – Whom the Father consecrated, dedicated, and sent into the world – 'You are blaspheming', because I said I am the Son of God?"

If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I am in the Father."

Again they sought to arrest Him, but he escaped from their hands.

He said that they can't believe, but then he commands them to believe.
I wonder if one day they will believe?
I mean, bow the knee before the Son and confess Him and believe?

And yet even if they do, how could Jesus refer to them as gods... or refer to anyone as gods?

Well, some people think that Scripture can be broken, and so they find a way to explain this away... like, "Well, he didn't really mean that.... You know..."

Some people argue that Jesus was just being a smart aleck, doing some kind of play on words... but he didn't really mean it.

Some people argue that Psalm 82 refers to angels, as if angels are gods.
But we judge angels one day.

Some people say, "Well, no, it's ancient Israelite Judges... These dudes are Israelite Judges."
But Psalm 82 says, "You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you."

And Jesus says it refers to those to whom the Word of God came.
Well, that's Israel, when they received the Law on Mount Sinai.
And that's these guys, because the Word of God is standing in front of them on Mount Zion.
And that's **us**, if in fact the Word of God came to us on Mount Calvary.

Gods.

You know, it wasn't Satan who came up with that whole "Image and likeness of God" thing.
Right?
You know who that was. It was God.
In the beginning, He said, "Let us make man in our own image and likeness."

You know, we sing, "There is none like You..."
And I think God would say, "You know, I appreciate the humility, but actually there are some like me... and that's supposed to be **YOU**. In my likeness."

Well, you know, Jesus is the complete likeness. The finished likeness.
Image of the invisible God, Firstborn of all creation.

According to Scripture, we're still being begotten and born – created in the image and likeness of God.

Father Vincent Donovan was a missionary to the Masai tribe in Tanzania.
He taught and he wrote:

Man is God appearing in the universe, appearing visibly in the midst of all he created. That changes the meaning of man, doesn't it?

I can see you Masai shaking your heads and saying, No! Man is not God. We know man, and he is filled with evil. He fights, he kills, he destroys, he does everything to separate others, and to separate himself from them.

I say to you Masai; you have not known man, you have never seen a man. Creation is not yet finished. What you see is creation groaning and moaning even until now, yearning to be finished and completed, to be the body of God.

But suppose the fullness of time had come and the work of God was perfect, and there appeared a man who was perfectly a man, according to the plan of God, a man completely human. If, once upon a time, there was such a man who was so completely a man, so perfectly human, then there would be no other way to describe him than to say; this man is God – God appearing in the universe. Isn't that so? Jesus was that man.

Perhaps the really surprising thing that the man Jesus did in his lifetime was to show us, not only what God is, but what man is.

Well, the devil tempted man to make himself in God's image. But, from the beginning, God willed to make man in His own image. When we believe the lie and become jealous of God, and so try to make ourselves in His image, it is the essence of evil. But when we believe the truth – trust God's heart... God makes us in His own image. It is the essence of Grace.

Well, Jesus doesn't just say, "Image and likeness of God." He says, "gods." And there's only one God. But what if the One God was in us?

John tells us that Jesus is the "only begotten Son of God," and he tells us that we must be "begotten of God." We can only be begotten if the Only Begotten is begotten in us. Scripture says that Christ is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (I Cor 6:17), life (Col. 3:4), and we have His mind (I Cor. 2:16) ... and that we receive His Spirit, becoming one spirit with Him (I Cor. 6:17).

And He gives us His body and blood, and we become His body and blood.

What else is there?

Life, Spirit, Mind, Body... Faith, Hope, and Love. He's that too.

So Paul writes, "It's no longer I who live but Christ in me." (Galatians 2:20)

And Christ is God, so Christ in me is God in me.

Ephesians 4:6 – "One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all and in all."

1 Corinthians 15:28 – "... that God may be all in all."

Remember, it's Hanukkah in John 10 – the consecration of the temple. Jesus is God's temple, and we become God's temple ... filled with eternal fire and light. And God is light.

God glorifies us with Himself.

Isaiah 48:11 says, "God gives His glory to no other." But in the Revelation, we shine with God's glory. It's not because God gave His glory... God gave Himself. We are His temple, His body, His bride.

And check this out:

Col. 1:19 – "In Him (Jesus) all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell."

Eph. 3:19 – "May you be filled with all the fullness of God."

Like Jesus.

John 17 – Jesus prays, "I ask ... that they may all be one, just as you, Father are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us ... I in them and you in me... (You) loved them even as You loved me."

It's like Jesus is pulling us into the Trinity.

So, His Father is our Father, and we are sons too... daughters too...

many persons, and one substance.

2 Peter 1:4 – We become "Partakers of the Divine nature."

The early Church fathers called this "*Theosis*" – "The deification of man."

St. Irenaeus wrote, "The Word became man and the Son of God son of man: so that man ... might become a Son of God." (*Journeys into Joy* p. 119)

St. Athanasius wrote, "He was made man that we might be made god."

Basil the Great argued: "Man is nothing less than a creature that has received the order to become god." (*Deification of Man*, p. 7)

Thomas Aquinas wrote, "[He] assumed our nature, so that He made man, might make men gods."

Now hear me:

I sure don't want to be smoted and eaten by worms.

So I need to say I don't know exactly what this means.

But that's OK. Neither did John.

In I John 3, he writes:

Behold, what manner of love the Father has given unto us that we should be called the children of God; and so we are... Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him ... see him as he is."

What I most truly am is a glorious mystery, and yet... most like Jesus.

Well, Jesus said, “You are gods.” And I think He said it to the same folks to whom he also said, “Your father is the devil, the father of lies.”

It's like there are two voices, and two *me's*:

The lie and the truth;
The old man and the new man;
The flesh and the spirit;
The vessel of wrath and the vessel of mercy;
The spawn of the devil and the child of God;
The goat that must go into the eternal fire,
and the sheep that is the very life of God— the Lamb.
The old Adam and the new Adam.

The old Adam is the Adam I try to make in the image of God. It's man making himself God. And the new Adam is Jesus – the Adam God makes in His own image with Himself. It's God making Himself man.

And old Adam and a new Adam. And I ... I watch one die, and the other rise from the dead. Twice Scripture says, "As in Adam all die, so in Christ will all be made alive."

At the cross, Jesus dies my death and gives me His life... God's life.

This is Psalm 82:

God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment.

Where's that?

... I said, "you are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you; Nevertheless, like men you shall die, and fall as one man, O princes." Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations.

According to John, this judgment – THE judgment – happened on Calvary, at the cross. Jesus did not make Himself God, but He died in order to make you “a god.”

I mean, **in** God, **of** God, filled with the fullness of God, the Sanctuary of God, and the Divine Council.

And now, you see... there's no point in being jealous of anyone.

1. My old man is judged, and he's already lost.
2. My new man is Jesus, and He's already won.

I – whatever I am – is watching Him rise in me.

I am experiencing my own creation.

I am being born from above.

So, check this out ... It appears that God is far more interested in making me “a god” than I am interested in making myself a god. So there’s no point in being jealous of God, or anyone. There’s no point in being jealous, because God is jealous for me. My God is a jealous God, because He’s jealous for me. He wants me to be like Him.

He’s not jealous like I get jealous... because I’m petty, small, spiteful, and insecure.
You cannot damage God’s ego, like my ego.
He’s not uptight over His identity or stingy with His God-ness.
In fact, the essence of God is to give Himself away.
God is Love, and Jesus is the Revelation of God.

Phil. 2:6 – *He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped...* Held onto.
See? He’s the perfect Adam... equal with God.
Yet He constantly gives His “God-ness” away.

In the words of St. Athanasious, “He’s God become man, that men might become God.”
He is the Gift of God... the Gift that is God.

So if you’re jealous of God, you’ll kill God, and make yourself a child of the devil.
But if you worship God, you’ll receive God as a gift, and God will make you a child of God.
The truth is, we have already been jealous of God, and already killed God... and yet, that’s where we see God and worship God... at Calvary.

On the cross, we took His life, and yet He for-gave His life to us.

He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him, and bestowed on Him the Name above all names; that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the God the Father.

On the cross, we took His life; yet He for-gave His life to us.

- 1) God owns everything. But on the cross, God gave everything.
Paul writes, “Why are you jealous? All things are yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.”
- 2) God can do anything. But on the cross, He did nothing, that you might do everything.
And Paul writes, “In Him, I can do all things.”
- 3) God is more glorious than anyone. But on the cross, He emptied Himself, to be glorified in everyone.

- 4) God gets what He wants, and what He wants is you.
- 5) God is Love, and on the cross, He gave Himself to you.
He is jealous for you, and once He has you and you have Him,
You will receive “all things with Him.”
Like a god.

Sigmund Freud was right.

On the cross (the ancient tree), jealous men took the life of God, for they wanted to make themselves God. That’s religion.

But on the cross, God gave those jealous men His heart, for He wanted to make them in His own image. That’s grace.

It’s the sloppy wet kiss that causes us to see, and turns us into sons.

This is one of my favorite stories. And it’s true.

Joe Bayly loved his son Tim. Sons can be insecure, and jealous of a good father, and so crush that father’s heart. Tim left home, left the faith, and moved into a commune in an old house in Chicago. Tim broke Joe’s heart.

One night, around 11:00pm, he got a call: “This is the police. Your son was arrested for a DUI. We have him here in the town jail.”

Joe got out of bed and drove a half-hour in the bitter cold to that town. But when he got there, they told him, “We don’t have a Tim Bayly here.” Joe thought perhaps he had heard wrong, so he drove to the next town, and then the next, and the next, and the next.

Finally, around 4:00am, he decided to drive to that old house in Chicago where Tim had been sleeping. The door wasn’t locked. He stepped over bodies, looking for his boy. Then in the faint light of the darkened room, he saw Tim asleep in a sleeping bag, strewn across an old mattress. Quietly, Joe walked over to the mattress and stood over his boy. Then, moved with compassion, he bent down ... carefully, so as not to wake him, bent down, and lightly kissed him on the cheek. Then, he left.

In the months that followed, Tim started visiting his parents. Then, he started going to church. Then, he re-committed his life to Christ. And then, he announced he was going into the ministry, like his dad ... in his father’s image.

Well, before Joe died, and years after Tim had returned home, on a walk one day, Joe turned to Tim and asked, “Tim, what brought you back?”

Tim looked at his dad and said, "Don't you know? Dad, remember that night years ago when you got a call that I was in jail? Dad that was my friend. It was a prank. When you came to the house, I only acted asleep. Dad, I was wide awake. I knew you'd driven all night in the cold, and I wondered what you would do to me after all I did to you. And all you did was bend down, and kiss me gently on the cheek. Dad, the kiss brought me back."

It was the father's kiss that bought the prodigal son back.
It's the Father's kindness that leads us to repentance.

This is the kiss that brings you back, and makes you in your Father's image and likeness.
We literally broke our Father's heart, and took His life.
Yet He for-gave His life, and with His broken heart, He brings us home.
And with His kiss, He shapes us in His image.

[Communion]

Worship Song: "How He Loves"

*He is jealous for me, Loves like a hurricane
I am a tree, bending beneath the weight of His wind and mercy
When all of a sudden, I am unaware of these afflictions
Eclipsed by glory
And I realize just how beautiful You are
And how great Your affections are for me*

Oh, how He loves us...

*We are His portion and He is our prize
Drawn to redemption by the grace in His eyes
If grace is an ocean we're all sinking
And heaven meets earth like a sloppy, wet kiss
And my heart turns violently inside of my chest
I don't have time to maintain these regrets
When I think about the way*

*He loves us, oh how He loves us...
You love us, oh how You love us...*

Close your eyes.

Are you jealous?

Is there anyone that you'd rather be?

Search your world. Maybe it's a movie star. Maybe it's the rich guy up the street. Maybe it's your cousin. Maybe it's your dad.

Is there anyone's life that you would rather have?

You see, I think the Lord would ask you this question:

“Why are you jealous? It's because you do not realize who you are.

And you do not realize who I AM.

I AM giving myself to you.

I AM telling you your story.

And there is not a better story.

And so please, don't be jealous.

I AM jealous... for you.

And on your behalf.

You're mine. “

In Jesus' name, believe the Gospel. Amen.